



### **The Colorado River Compact**

- The Colorado River Compact is an interstate agreement crafted in 1922 by the seven U.S. states connected to the Colorado River.
- The Compact divided the Colorado River Basin into two sub-basins: an upper basin that effectively includes Colorado, Wyoming, Utah and New Mexico, and a Lower Basin that contains California, Arizona and Nevada. The dividing point is Lee Ferry, just downstream of Lake Powell.
- This agreement intended to give 7.5 million acre-feet of water to both of these basins, but expressed that by saying that the Upper Basin must deliver 75 million acre-feet of water to the Lower Basin on a rolling ten-year average.
- The Lower Basin also received up to an additional 1 million acre-feet water from unidentified Colorado River Basin sources.
- Mexico's use of Colorado River water was acknowledged, though no amount of water was specified in the 1922 Compact. Its share of Colorado River water was quantified at 1.5 million acre-feet by a treaty signed in 1944.
- Congressional passage of the Boulder Canyon Project Act in 1924 ratified the 1922 Compact, and also specified that California received 4.4 million acre-feet of the Lower Basin's share, Arizona got 2.8 million acre-feet and Nevada received 300,000 acre-feet of Colorado River water.
- The Upper Basin divided up their portion of water in 1948 by assigning percentage values to each state since earlier estimate of how much water was available proved to be high. Of the Upper Basin's share, Colorado receives 51.25%, Utah 23%, Wyoming 14% and New Mexico gets 1.23%.
- Because of differing interpretations of the language of the 1922 Compact and the understanding that there is not as much water available in the Colorado River as the Compact negotiators had understood, much water is in Colorado's share of the Colorado River is still a point of dispute.